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SUBJECT: IRELAND AGREES WITH USG ON UZBEKISTAN

REF: STATE 143807

Classified By: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SECTION CHIEF TED PIERCE, REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) POLOFF delivered reftel to Ruaidhri Dowling, Deputy Director of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on October 16, 2007. Dowling responded that the Irish Government largely agrees with the US on Uzbekistan and that Ireland is taking a "principled stand" that he said would reinforce the thrust of Irish human rights policy and bolster Ireland's "moral authority." He noted the Irish Government's desire to engage with Uzbekistan, but said that Irish tactics differed somewhat from other EU capitals. He referred specifically to Germany--but also to Austria and "other European capitals" following Germany's lead--who are pressing to relax sanctions, which he said Ireland opposed.

¶2. (C) Dowling expressed DFA's approval of changes made to EU draft conclusions on Uzbekistan that he said considerably strengthened the conditionality of easing sanctions, while strengthening the EU review process in six months based on conditions on the ground. Dowling noted Ireland was particularly pleased with a reference in the GAERC's conclusions to Uzbekistan's upcoming presidential elections, which he said was very "hard fought." Dowling stated that Ireland was not optimistic for positive signs from the upcoming elections or events over the next six months.

¶3. (C) Dowling expressed some concern about the Irish Government's perception of "mixed messages" from the USG (particularly between Departments of State and Defense) in recent weeks on Uzbekistan. Per guidance, POLOFF sought to assure Dowling that the US has restricted military, security, and other assistance to the Uzbek central government and relayed to Dowling that all US departments worked and coordinated carefully to remain on the same page.
FOLEY